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CALLIMACHEAN ECHOES IN CATULLUS 65

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### Callimachean Echoes in Catullus 65

etsi me assiduo confectum cura dolore  
 seuocat a doctis, Ortale, uirginibus,  
 nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus  
 4 mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis —  
 namque mei nuper Lethaeo gurgite fratris  
 pallidulum manans alluit unda pedem,  
 Troia Rhoeteo quem subter litore tellus  
 8 ereptum nostris obterit ex oculis.  
 < >  
 numquam ego te, uita frater amabilior,  
 aspiciam posthac? at certe semper amabo,  
 12 semper maesta tua carmina morte canam,  
 qualia sub densis ramorum concinit umbris  
 Daulias, absumpti fata gemens Ityli.  
 sed tamen in tantis maeroribus, Ortale, mitto  
 16 haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae,  
 ne tua dicta uagis nequiquam credita uentis  
 effluxisse meo forte putes animo,  
 ut missum sponsi furtiuo munere malum  
 20 procurrit casto uirginis e gremio,  
 quod miserae oblitae molli sub ueste locatum,  
 dum aduentu matris prosilit, excutitur,  
 atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu,  
 24 huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.

It is an old idea that the final six verses of this poem reflect Callimachus' narrative of the love of Acontius and Cydippe. As the poem serves as an introduction to a 'translation' of Callimachus, the idea is not a very bold one, but it has recently been explicitly dismissed on the grounds that what we know of Callimachus' narrative is quite different to Catullus' image of the young *uirgo* surprised by her mother into revealing the apple sent to her by her *sponsus*.<sup>1</sup> In Callimachus, the truth is revealed by the oracular Apollo and by subsequent questioning of Cydippe by her father (fr. 75. 20-39); it is also very unlikely that Callimachus' Cydippe kept the treacherous apple after she had been trapped into swearing to marry Acontius.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H.P. Syndikus, *Catull, Eine Interpretation. II* (Darmstadt 1990) 197-8. It is noteworthy that, whereas Kroll notes the debt to Callimachus, Fordyce does not consider the possibility worthy of mention. Wilamowitz toyed with the idea of influence from Apollonius Rhodius' similes of 'everyday life' (*Hellenistische Dichtung* II 304-5), but there is no concrete point of contact.

<sup>2</sup> This would be certain if—as I think likely—the action of ἀπέρριψεν, 'threw away', at Aristaenetos 1.10.39 (quoted below) referred, on at least one level, to the apple and was derived from Callimachus; text and

In this note, I wish to assemble again the case for Catullus' debt to Callimachus, and to comment briefly on the interesting implications of this for our understanding of Catullus 65.

Acontius 'sent' Cydippe an apple which was also a letter to be read aloud; the inscribed token of love carried with it the required answering token from the beloved in the shape of the binding oath which Cydippe duly utters. As such, the inscribed apple is in pointed contrast to the inscription of the beloved's name on trees (fr. 73), an inscription which Cydippe will never see or read and which can find no reciprocity from the beloved. Both Catullus 65 and 66 are pledges of the poet's affection for Hortalus and therefore 'apples'. Moreover, on at least one reading of the concluding verses of Poem 65, Poem 66 is in fact announced by the simile as an 'apple', and, on any reading, the resonance of v. 3 in which poetry is described as *dulcis Musarum ... fetus* allows the 'poem as apple' assimilation to be felt clearly.<sup>3</sup> Not only are both Poems 65 and 66 'apples', they are also both *carmina Battiadae*.<sup>4</sup>

The detailed comparison of motifs is always a risky basis for argument because of the very nature of the commonplace. In this case we are also confronted with the problems of the various compositional techniques of Aristaenetus, our main source for the lost sections of Callimachus' narrative,<sup>5</sup> and of whether the epistolographer worked directly from Callimachus or from an intermediary paraphrase or from both.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the circumstantial case seems very strong here. With *casto* (v. 20) and the girl's blush (v. 24) cf. Aristaenetus 1.10.39-45: τὸν ἐρωτικὸν λόγον ἀπέρριψεν αἰδουμένη, καὶ ἡμίφωνον καταλέλοιπε λέξιν τὴν ἐπ' ἐσχάτῳ κειμένην ἅτε διαμνημονεύουσιν γάμον, ὃν σεμνὴ παρθένος κἄν ἑτέρου λέγοντος ἠρυθρίασε. καὶ τοσοῦτον ἐξεφοινίχθη τὸ πρόσωπον, ὡς δοκεῖν ὅτι τῶν παρειῶν ἔνδον εἶχε τινα ῥόδων λειμῶνα, καὶ ἐρύθημα τοῦτο μηδὲν τῶν χειλῶν αὐτῆς διαφέρειν; both motifs occur also in Ovid's treatment (blush: *Heroides* 20.6, 97, 21.112; chasteness: *Heroides* 20.9-10). With *furtiuo munere* (v. 19) cf. Aristaenetus 1.10.27 λάθρᾳ διεκύλισας πρὸ τῶν τῆς θεραπαίνης ποδῶν. It is true that we have no good evidence for a major role for Cydippe's mother in Callimachus, but it is striking that two of our other post-Callimachean sources feature a similar motif of the apple slipping unnoticed out of clothing. In Ovid, Acontius tells Cydippe that she should not be ashamed to tell her mother everything, including how he delivered the treacherous apple:

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interpretation of that passage are, however, uncertain, cf. (for a different interpretation) W.G. Arnott, *GRBS* 14 (1973) 208.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. C. Witke, *Enarratio Catulliana. Carmina L, XXX, LXV, LXVIII* (Leiden 1968) 21. Commentators and translators are divided over the formal referent of the simile: is the 'apple' like *tua dicta* of v. 17 or like *carmina Battiadae* of v. 16? Cf. (respectively) the notes of Ellis and Quinn ad loc. The resonance I am exploring remains, of course, even with the former interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> For stylistic 'Callimacheanism' in Catullus 65 cf. J.B. Van Sickle, *TAPA* 99 (1968) 487-508 W. Clausen, *HSCP* 74 (1970) 85-94.

<sup>5</sup> For some brief remarks cf. Arnott *art. cit.* (n. 2).

<sup>6</sup> Pfeiffer follows A. Vogliano, *Papiri della Università di Milano* I (Milan 1937) 115, in assuming an intermediary source because both Aristaenetus (1.10.37-8) and the *Diegesis* give Cydippe's oath in the same words which could not appear in elegiac verse. This is a strong, but not a conclusive, argument.

et, te dum nimium miror, nota certa furoris,  
 deciderint umero pallia lapsa meo;  
 postmodo nescio qua uenisse uolubile malum,  
 uerba ferens doctis insidiosa notis. (Her. 20.207-10)

In Aristaenetus, the nurse picks up the apple διαποροῦσα τίς ἄρα τοῦτο τῶν παρθένων μετέωρος ἀπέβαλε τοῦ προκολπίου (1.10.29-30). The closeness of this passage to Catullus' verses has, of course, been noted before,<sup>7</sup> but it is worth adding to the circumstantial case here. Moreover, Ovid's Cydippe hides the letter she is writing *trepido ... sinu* (Her. 21.16); it is tempting to see here a re-use by Ovid of a motif already in the tradition. Other than the oath, we *know* virtually nothing about how Callimachus treated the incident at the temple, so it would be best not to leave any 'coincidences' out of account.

After Cydippe, Acontius. Here we enter even deeper into speculation, but not, I hope, unprofitable speculation. In Poems 65 and 68 Catullus explores (among other things) the relationship between grief and love. The careworn and griefstricken figure of the opening verses of Poem 65 does not inevitably recall the distressed and wasted Acontius (cf. Aristaen. 1.10.51-2), but the idea may be worth entertaining. In a passage striking both for its imagery and for its dactylic rhythm, Aristaenetus apostrophises the suffering Acontius: τέως οὖν τὸν δείλαιον—ἀλλ' οὔτε θαλάττης τρικυμίας οὔτε πόθου κορυφούμενον σάλον εὐμαρὲς ἀφηγέισθαι (1.10.47-8). That Aristaenetus is here close to the Callimachean model was suggested long ago,<sup>8</sup> but it is worth here juxtaposing this passage to Catullus' *tantis fluctuat ipsa malis*. The metaphor itself is, of course, a common one, and is used elsewhere by Catullus himself (64.97-8, of Ariadne's erotic passion): the dactylic rhythm is also not conclusive, as Aristaenetus himself might well be responsible for this.<sup>9</sup> There is, however, a further point to be made. It is well known that Callimachus' Acontius was an influential model in subsequent Latin poetry: Vergil, *Eclogue* 2 and 10, and Propertius 1.18 are the most prominent examples.<sup>10</sup> Acontius becomes the classic example of the hapless lover who pours out his woes in song to lonely nature. Part at least of his lament was given in direct discourse (fr. 73-4); like Theocritus' Cyclops, Acontius was made a poet by love (just as his love provided Callimachus' Muse with material, fr. 75.77). The parallel is not idle because it is precisely the Cyclops with whom Acontius is combined in the figure of Vergil's Corydon in *Eclogue* 2. Nicias' reply to *Idyll* 11, ἦν ἄρ' ἀληθὲς τοῦτο, Θεόκριτε· οἱ γὰρ Ἔρωτες ἰποιητὰς πολλοὺς ἐδίδαξαν τοὺς πρὶν ἀμούσους, reworks the famous verses of Euri-

<sup>7</sup> Cf. K. Dilthey, *De Callimachi Cydippa* (Leipzig 1863) 65, though he is not explicit on the subject; L.W. Daly, *CP* 47 (1952) 97-9. μετέωρος, 'careless, distracted', is a late use (Aristaenetus 1.23.10, LSJ s.v. III 5), though hardly beyond Callimachus.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Dilthey, *op. cit.* 69-70, followed by A. Dietzler, *Die Akontios-Elegie des Kallimachos* (diss. Greifswald 1933) 37. Suggestive support for the idea might be sought in κορύσσειο at Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 4.448, where the image is of the storm-wave of love.

<sup>9</sup> A comparison of Callimachus fr. 73 and Aristaenetus 1.10.60-1 is very instructive for the latter's technique.

<sup>10</sup> For Vergil cf. D.O. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* (Cambridge 1975) 85-9 and E.J. Kenney, *ICS* 81 (1983) 48-51; for Propertius cf. F. Cairns, *CR* 19 (1969) 131-4.

pides' *Stheneboia*, ποιητὴν δ' ἄρα | Ἔρωσ διδάσκει κἄν ἄμουσος ἦι τὸ πρὶν (fr. 663 Nauck), and it is tempting to suppose that these same verses figured by echo in Callimachus' narrative.<sup>11</sup> Be that as it may, Catullus' poem represents a clear inversion of the 'Acontian' idea: because of *cura* the poet cannot compose, and must instead be content with *expressa ... carmina Battiadae*. His 'removal' (*seuocat*, v. 2) *a doctis ... uirginibus* replays Acontius' flight from his parents and usual company into the loneliness of nature.<sup>12</sup>

However weak or strong each individual point may be—and there may yet be more to be said—<sup>13</sup> it seems hardly possible that Callimachus' only relevance for the appreciation of Poem 65 lies in v. 16. If even some of the connections I have assembled here hold good, then Poem 65, and especially the concluding six verses, present a creative reworking of Callimachean ideas and motifs taken from an erotically charged *aition* from *Aitia* 3 as an introduction to a 'translation' of another erotically charged *aition* from *Aitia* 4. The very distance of the apple simile from its Callimachean 'model' is in fact crucial to its significance. The related, but contrasting, forms of re-writing represented by the two juxtaposed poems raise serious questions about the nature of *imitatio*, the use of literary models, and the role of the individual poet within a poetics such as that practised by both Catullus and (perhaps) Hortalus (cf. Fordyce on Cat. 95.3). That such questions were of concern to neoteric, as to later, poets hardly requires demonstration. It may well be that the repetition of a passage on his brother's death in Poem 68 (or between 68a and 68b, if that is preferable) is a further manifestation of the exploration of the parameters of creativity, for that is the use to which Catullus has put Callimachus in Poems 65 and 66.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Callimachus' familiarity with Theocritus 11 seems suggested by *Epigram* 46 Pfeiffer (= 3 GP).

<sup>12</sup> Witke, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 14, rightly noted how the opening verses could evoke the idea of the lovesick poet.

<sup>13</sup> Acontius, φηγοῖς ὑποκαθήμενος ἢ πελέαις (Aristaenetus 1.10.57), may well be relevant. Did Acontius complain that Cydippe had forgotten her oath (cf. Cat. 65.17-18)?

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Elaine Fantham and Ludwig Koenen for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this note.